

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, US, EEC, NATO

SUBJECT: ORTOLI ON THE EC'S ROLE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

REF: EC BRUSSELS 4202

1. SUMMARY: ORTOLI HAS USED AN INFORMAL OCCASION TO REVIEW WITH US THE GOALS OF THE EC'S OVERALL MEDITERRANEAN POLICY. HE PLACES MAIN EMPHASIS ON TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS AS A CONTRIBUTION TO CLOSER TIES AND POLITICAL STABILITY. ORTOLI HOPES THAT THE US WILL FAVOR AN INCREASED "EUROPEAN" PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH ALLIANCE AND US INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

2. AT A SOCIAL GATHERING IN CONNECTION WITH THE SIGNATURE OF THE EC/ISRAEL AGREEMENT (REFTEL), EC COMMISSION PRESIDENT ORTOLI GAVE THE DCM HIS VIEWS ON THE COMMUNITY'S "GLOBAL" MEDITERRANEAN POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF US-EC RELATIONS.

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ORTOLI WAS SOMEWHAT CONCERNED THAT WASHINGTON MIGHT SEE THE NEW

SERIES OF THE AGREEMENTS THE COMMUNITY IS NEGOTIATING WITH MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES (PLUS PORTUGAL) AS IN CONFLICT WITH SOME US OBJECTIVES OR INTERESTS. GIVEN CURRENT INSTABILITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND NEAR EAST, SAID ORTOLI, THE US SHOULD WELCOME AND ENCOURAGE AN INCREASED COMMUNITY PRESENCE WHETHER OR NOT IT IS INTERPRETED BY SOME PEOPLE AS A MANIFESTATION OF EUROPEAN "INDEPENDENCE." THIS WOULD BE CONSONANT WITH FUNDAMENTAL ALLIANCE AND US-EUROPEAN INTERESTS.

3. ORTOLI WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE COMMUNITY WILL HAVE A RANGE OF ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS AT ITS DISPOSAL BEYOND TRADE POLICY. HE DOES NOT THINK THE INCREASED EUROPEAN PRESENCE SHOULD MANIFEST ITSELF IN OVERT POLITICAL MOVES BY THE COMMUNITY OR BY THE NINE COLLECTIVELY; E.G. IN CONNECTION WITH MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE COMMUNITY'S "GLOBAL" APPROACH TO ITS ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE AREA SHOULD PAY SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL DIVIDENDS OVER TIME AS WELL AS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED. HE HOPED THAT WASHINGTON WOULD SEE THE MATTER IN THE SAME LIGHT.

4. WE TOLD ORTOLI THAT THE US HAD LONG FAVORED AN INCREASED COMMUNITY ROLE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN INCLUDING PORTUGAL. PAST DIFFERENCES IN THE ECONOMIC AREA HAD ARISEN PRIMARILY OVER SPECIFIC TRADE AND TRADE POLICY ASPECTS WHERE THE US FELT IT HAD TO DEFEND ITS OWN INTERESTS. WHILE FUTURE PROBLEMS COULD NOT BE RULED OUT, WE HAD BEEN VERY ENCOURAGED BY THE ELIMINATION OF REVERSE PREFERENCES AS A FEATURE OF THE NEW ACP AGREEMENT. ANY STEP IN THIS DIRECTION WOULD BE HELPFUL. ORTOLI RESPONDED BY AGAIN EMPHASIZING HIS VIEW THAT THE US SHOULD NOT FEAR BUT SHOULD WELCOME ANYTHING THE COMMUNITY CAN DO TO PROMOTE CLOSER TIES WITH MEDITERRANEAN AND NEAR EASTERN COUNTRIES. HE HOPED WE WOULD NOT TAKE TOO NARROW A VIEW OF TRADE POLICY ISSUES. GREENWALD

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